



Send & Ripley History Society Surrey

Founded 1975



History of Send and Ripley

www.sendandripleyhistorysociety.co.uk

St Mary Magdalen Church

Built in the late Norman period, circa 1160, the chancel of the church of St Mary Magdalen is the main evidence of Norman activity in Ripley. The chancel is earlier and more ornate than that of the one-time mother church of St Mary The Virgin in Send and pre-dates the Augustinian priory at Newark, Ripley by some 35/40 years. This has led to the speculation that Ripley church was built by the Augustinians as the first building on their originally intended site for a priory. However, when a much more suitable location was provided to them on land near the River Wey, the building plans for the original site were abandoned and the church was completed in a simpler style. It subsequently served as a chapel of ease, a wayside hospice and finally a parish church.



Ripley Chapel, c1900. Artist – anon

For further information see *The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalen, Ripley Surrey*. Published by Send and Ripley History Society 2002.

Newark Priory

Of considerable importance to the inhabitants of Send and Ripley (as well as the communities further afield) was the establishment of Newark Priory in Ripley by Augustinian canons in the late twelfth century, during the reign of Richard I (1189-1199). The first mention of Ripley is in a charter drawn up in Richard's time by Ruald de Calna and later confirmed by his wife Beatrice de Sandes in 1210. It gave land to the Augustinians at *Aldebyrie or Novo Loco* (new location), also called *Newark* (new work), together with other property including the church in Send and the chapel at Ripley. The words 'Novo Loco' have led to the speculation that the Augustinians first built a church in Ripley and then transferred their attention to a new site for the priory, i.e. the 'new location', on the land given to them by Ruald and Beatrice. (*The Founders of Newark Priory*, by Capt. C M H Pearce, SyAS Vol. XL).

Newark Priory Ripley. © Photo by Ken Bourne c1980



An early charter granted by Henry III (1216-72) to Newark Priory provides that in exchange for a palfrey (saddle horse), the priory may hold an annual fair in Ripley on the eve and feast day of St Mary Magdalen (July 22nd). The fair continues to this day (*not necessarily without a break*), currently called 'The Ripley Event' which is held on Ripley Green each year on or about this date.



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➤ Newark Priory *continued*

At its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539 the Priory was maintaining 20 poor persons in an almshouse in Ripley; this may have been in the building now known as 'The Anchor'. (*The Almshouses and The Anchor*, by Bette Slatford and Les Bowerman, SRHS newsletter 59 page 8, 1984).

The Priory was originally founded by 13 canons and was dedicated to St. Mary The Virgin and St. Thomas the Martyr. At its dissolution there were 8 canons plus the Prior. In 1545 the Priory and its extensive lands were granted to Sir Anthony Browne, Master of The King's Horse. The Priory buildings were never re-used except as a quarry for buildings elsewhere, some locally, as in nearby Homewood Farm. The ruins, which are on privately owned land, can be seen from Newark Lane near the site of Newark Mill (burnt down in 1966). The visible remains are: the north and south walls of the presbytery, parts of the choir, the south transept, and the nave.

➤ Newark Mill

There were two mills mentioned in the Domesday survey. The position of one has not been determined. However, the other was probably located near the priory. Whatever its position a mill was given to the priory by Thomas and Alice de Send in the 13th century and is referred to in the cellarer's accounts for the year ending 1396/7. Well into the 20th century Newark Mill was a well-known landmark until its destruction by fire on Saturday December 3rd, 1966. The earliest part of this mill was mid 17th century with additions or rebuilds in the 18th and 19th centuries. On the site of a cut from the Wey Navigation near Newark Priory, its rebuild may thus have dated from the navigation's creation in 1653.



NEWARK MILL BY THE "WEY," RIPLEY, SURREY

For further information see *Newark Mill*, Bob Gale, 1991. Send and Ripley History Society.

➤ The Church of St Mary The Virgin, Send

The church of St Mary The Virgin, Send, is probably on the site of the church mentioned in the Domesday Survey and may have been constructed of wood although nothing survives from this period. The earliest part is the chancel, which is Early English circa 1220. It has no chancel arch and has an unusually wide nave re-built with a west tower in the late 15th century. Its south porch was added in the early 16th century probably during the incumbency of Thomas Marteyn (1501-1533) whose brass memorial is in the chancel.



©Ken Bourne c1980

There are some fragments of medieval glass in the southwest nave window and some fine 19th and 20th century glass throughout the rest of the church. Further details can be found in *The Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin, Send, Surrey*. Published by Send History Society 1980.



History of Send and Ripley

Domestic buildings

There are many buildings of considerable interest in the villages of Ripley and Send and the surrounding parishes.

The oldest known domestic building in the area is Vintage Cottage, Rose Lane, Ripley, which was believed by the Society to date from 1400. Recent dendrochronology testing arranged by the Society has shown that it was built in precisely 1391. The oldest domestic building known in the present parish of Send is Old Manor Cottage at Send Marsh Green. It was thought to have been built about 1450, but has now been dated by dendrochronology to between 1413 and 1445. (*L G B. Newsletter 76, p4, 1987.*)



Vintage Cottage

**(Early timber-framed houses had an open fire and no chimney.)*

The Wey Navigation

When Sir Richard Weston, grandson of the builder of Sutton Place, inherited the estate in 1613, he devised a scheme to make the barren parts more fertile by cutting a 'new Ryver' from Stoke Mill to Sutton Place whereby he could flood the land at will and make the grass grow more luxuriantly. This work appears to have been completed by 1619. Benefiting from this experience and further knowledge gained whilst in exile in the Low Countries during the Civil War (1642-6) he began the building of The Wey Navigation in 1651 completing it in the remarkably short period of less than three years. Fifteen and half miles long, it began at Guildford and provided a navigable route to the River Thames at Weybridge, about a third of its length passing through Send and Ripley. This was the first major canal building undertaken since Roman times and was well ahead of the great canal building boom of the 18th century. Barges going downstream carried mostly timber, flour, and oak bark (for tanning, at Send and elsewhere). Other commodities were coal, groceries and even gunpowder from the gunpowder mills at Chilworth. The New Inn at Cartbridge and the tannery in Tannery Lane, both in Send, were built as a result of the canal being there.

The 19th century was a period of stability, which is evidenced by the fact that Walter Grove remained lock keeper at Triggs Lock for 59 years from 1856 to 1915. During that time he brought up a large family in the tiny lock keeper's cottage, which is still there. The 17th century carpenter's shop at Worsfold Gates is remarkable too as an original building until recently still in use primarily for the building and repair of lock gates.

Three generations of the Stevens family acted as managers of the canal until the third, William Stevens, became the sole owner in 1902. His son gave it to the National Trust in 1963. It was in frequent use up to and during the 1930s and the last commercial barge was taken out of service in 1969 (*L G B. Newsletter 7, p7, 1976*).

There are several publications about the Wey Navigation produced by the National Trust and also, *London's Lost Route to the Sea* by P A L Vine and *The Wey Navigations* by Alan R Wardle.



History of Send and Ripley

● The Coming of the Railway to Woking Common

The railway came to what was then Woking Common in 1838. Prior to that, what we know as the village of Old Woking was the market town of Woking. It was a quiet, rural place miles from anywhere – "sleepy" is the word writers used about it. At that time most of the action locally was on the London to Portsmouth Road as witnessed by the fact that from 1813 to as late as 1865 Ripley was the post town for the whole of the area, including Woking. With the completion of the railway to Southampton in 1840 and more particularly to Portsmouth in 1859, stagecoach traffic on the Portsmouth Road virtually ceased and in 1865 Woking took over the role of post town.

The very building of the railway drew workmen from further afield, some of whom married local girls and settled in the Woking area. Once it was operating it attracted at first mostly professional commuters, followed later by a host of construction workers, servants, gardeners, etc.

While the original town of Woking became even more of a backwater, Ripley, without the coaches, lost much of its passing trade, to the extent that there was only one carrier a week from London and the Talbot Hotel in particular was said to have been given over to dust and mice.

● Ripley – The Cyclists Mecca

In 1869 a new form of transport, the bicycle, began to be reported in the local papers. By 1874 Ripley began to feature as a regular destination for the high wheel bicycle, (soon known as the Ordinary bicycle and later as it became unfashionable, by the derogatory name "Penny Farthing") By the late 1870s it had become something of a cult and its riders would seek refreshment and accommodation at the Talbot, the Anchor in Ripley and the Hautboy at Ockham.

Harriet Dibble, landlady at the Anchor, had been widowed with seven children in the 1860s, so she was pleased to have the custom of the high-spirited young men on bicycles with money to spend. For their part the bicyclists delighted in visiting this ancient low-beamed timber-framed inn run by Mrs Dibble and her two comely daughters, Annie and Harriet. The contrast between smoky, crowded, smelly, formal London and the relaxed, spacious rural delights of Ripley and the deserted road thither through the pine-woods is easily imagined.

By 1881 the Anchor was overwhelmingly the favourite place of call. As riders flocked there in their thousands, Annie Dibble instituted the signing of her famous Cyclists Visitors Books, a practice later copied elsewhere. When Herbert Liddell Cortis (the first to cycle 20 miles in one hour – in 1882) died in 1885, his admirers placed a memorial to him in Ripley church. In 1887 Lord Bury (later the 7th Earl of Albemarle) riding a Humber tricycle visited Ripley which he described as the "Mecca of all good cyclists". Such were the numbers arriving on Sundays that the vicar of Ripley organised special church services for them.

The Anchor, Ripley Surrey. 1886.





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▶ Ripley – The Cyclists Mecca *continued*

When Annie Dibble died in 1895 use of the visitors' books lapsed, but attendance was falling off anyway. After the death of her sister Harriet the following year a memorial window to them was installed in the south aisle of the church by the cyclists who mourned their loss. *Les Bowerman. 21/02/06.*

The visitors' books remained at the Anchor for over 100 years until in 2002 the then tenant sold six of them at an auction to a foreign buyer. The remaining six volumes were saved from the same fate by the timely intervention of the Chairman of the Society, Les Bowerman, who purchased them. At a subsequent public appeal, funds were raised so that ownership could be transferred to the Surrey History Centre at Woking, Surrey, where, after conservation, they will be available for all to see.

▶ The 20th century

Send had been the governing parish over both villages for almost a thousand years until December 1878 when Send and Ripley became two separate ecclesiastical parishes. Finally, *The Local Government Act of 1894* brought about further dramatic changes in parish management. In that year the two villages were divided into separate wards and finally became separate parishes in 1933.

The development of the motorcar and motorised transport in general in the late 19th century began to increase people's ability to visit towns and villages near and far more often, and Ripley developed the garages and tea shops to serve them. It already possessed the Talbot Hotel, the Anchor Inn and other pubs and was well placed to accommodate the increasing flow of tourists on the way to the coast via the 'Surrey pines'. Trade prospered but as the 20th century progressed, the village, as elsewhere, began to suffer from the continuous onslaught of traffic.

The traffic flow on the old A3 London to Portsmouth route, which passed through Ripley, had steadily increased from the 1920s. In spite of road improvements, or because of them, by the 1960s Ripley had become a notorious 'bottle-neck', particularly at peak traffic flow times to the extent that, in the early morning and late afternoon, congestion especially at weekends, was so bad that it could take up to half-an-hour to pass through the village; thus it became a route to avoid if at all possible. Of course the A3 from the Guildford by-pass and all the way into London was tremendously overburdened with vehicles. At the time our Chairman Les Bowerman, had his own unique solution to this. He simply cycled daily from Jacobs Well, near Guildford to his place of work at Shepherds Bush some 25 miles each way.

The building of the Ripley by-pass, which was completed in 1976, eased the traffic flow and reunited the two halves of Ripley, making it once more a more civilised place for shopping and relaxation. The opening of the M25 interchange at Wisley in 1983 had another marked effect on the area, attracting again a good deal of traffic through Send and Ripley on its way to and from the motorway.